

Christian Magnanimity.

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the
CATHEDRAL CHURCH
AT
WORCESTER
AT THE
Time of the Assizes,
September 21. 1690.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
EDWARD Lord Bishop of *Worcester.*

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Henry Mortlocke* at the *Phoenix* in
St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1690.

7. *Minutog M. collid.*

SERMON

CHURCH

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WORCESTER

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2000

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD
Benedictine Monk of the Abbey of

22943

To my Honoured Friends,

ROBERT BERKELY, Esq;

High-Sheriff of the County of WORCESTER,

AND

The Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury.

Gentlemen,

IT is at Your Request, that I Publish this Sermon, which You were Pleased to think might be Usefull to others, as well as to those who heard it. And I could not deny the First Request that was made to me by the Gentlemen of this Country, in which I have found so much Civility and Kindness. I thank God, I came thither with no other Intention but to do as much Good as I could; and I hope I shall always pursue that Design with a sincere and vigorous Mind, as far as I have Health and Opportunity. I thought I could not do my Duty at this time, without Representing the Evil and Mischief of some very unseasonable Heats and Animosities,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

among those who pretend to the same Common Interest, as to Religion and Laws, which are the most certain Standard of our Publick Good; and none, but such as are Enemies to it, can understand it otherwise.

May God Almighty Bless this Country and the Whole Nation, with a hearty Zeal and Concernment for it.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Worcester,
Sept. 23.
1690.

Your Faithfull Servant

for the best Ends,

E. WIGORN.

in heding (1) 1790
A
SERMON

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The Assizes

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WORCESTER,

September 21. 1690.

2 T I M. I. 7.

*For God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but
of Power, and of Love and of a Sound Mind.*

IF we look into the Scope and Design
of this Epistle, we shall find S. Paul at
the time of writing it, under more than
ordinary Apprehensions of the sad Con-
dition of the Christian Church.

As to *Himself*, he had great Satisfaction
in the particular Care of Divine Providence
towards Him: For, *God* had not onely for-
merly delivered him out of many Persecu-
tions;

2 Tim. ii. 11.

tions ; but had lately Rescued him out of the
 Ch. iv. *Mouth of the Lion, i. e.* from a great and im-
 17. *minent Danger. And though he foresaw, that*
 Ch. iv. 6. *the time of his Departure was at hand ; yet that was*
so far from giving him any Trouble, that he
had the Comfort of a Good Conscience in
looking back ; I have fought a good fight, I
 Verf. 7. *have finished my course, I have kept the faith ;*
 Verf. 8. *and in looking forward, Henceforth there is*
laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which
the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at
that Day.

But all his Dissatisfaction did arise from
 looking about him ; *For without were Fight-*
ings, and within were Fears. The Persecutions
 abroad were indeed so sharp and severe, that
 none could keep a Good Conscience without
 a share in them ; which makes him say, *Yea,*
 Verf. 12. *and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall*
suffer Persecutions. But this was not that which
 troubled him most ; for there were two things
 which seem to have made a deep and sad Im-
 pression upon his Mind.

(1.) He observed a great Coldness and In-
 differency among some who pretended a
 mighty Zeal for the common Interest of
 their Religion before. Of this he gives a
 strange Instance in his own Case. *At my first*
Answer,

Answer, saith he, *no man stood with me; but all men forsook me; I pray God he be not laid to their Charge.* They might think it Prudence and Caution at such a dangerous time; but the Apostle certainly thought it a fault, or else he would never have pray'd *that it might not be laid to their Charge.* Something might be said in Excuse of those who were so near danger; but what can be said for the general Coldness of those at a Distance? *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.* A sad Consideration to Timothy, who was entrusted by him with the particular Care of those in Asia! For, what Comfort could he hope for among them, who were turned away from S. Paul? Such a Defection as this must needs bring great dishonour to Religion, as well as dissatisfaction to him.

Ch. iv. 16

Ch. i. 15.

(2.) He observed a busie sort of Seducers, who were crept in among them; who were crafty, restless and designing Men; such as could not compass their own ends without taking upon them a pretence of Zeal for Religion. They were Men of as ill Tempers as we can well imagine Men to be; *They were lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud; &c.* But he concludes their Character with

Ch. iii. 1.

2, 3, 4.

with what one would have least expected from
 Verf. 5. such a sort of Men, *that they had a Form of
 Godliness.* They were such *painted Sepulchres*
 that made a more than ordinary Shew and
 Appearance, but within there was nothing but
 Rottenness and Corruption. Men who pre-
 tended to Religion without Vertue; and ho-
 ped to be accounted *Godly* without any real
 Goodness. They made a great Shew of Zeal
 about some things, and were industrious in
 gaining Profelytes; for which end *they crept
 into Houses, &c.* but whatever they pretended,
 their own Interest lay at bottom; Suppo-
 1 Tim.vj. *sing that gain is Godliness;* and they were so
 5 far from any hopes of Amendment, that
 S. Paul gives that dreadfull character of them,
 2 Tim. iij. *that they waxed worse and worse, deceiving and*
 13 *being deceived.*

And what now should *Timothy* do under
 such a Complication of ill Circumstances?
 Should he onely stand still and see which way
 things would go? Or should he give way
 to Despondency and sink under the Burthen
 of his Fears? No, S. Paul, although at a Di-
 stance, and a *Prisoner*, yet thinks fit to Rouse,
 to Animate, to Incourage him; and not
 onely to put him in Mind of the Gift of God
 1 Tim. i. 6 *which was in him;* but of that Spirit and
 Temper,

Temper, which true *Christianity* possesses mens minds with.

For God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power, of Love and of a Sound Mind.

Which words may be considered Two ways:

I. With Respect to *Difficulties* and *Troubles* in the World; and so it is not a *Spirit of Fear*, but of *Power*. Some render it *Spiritus Timiditatis*, a timorous, pusillanimous Spirit; which is apt to be dejected with Fears, so as not to have Courage and Resolution enough to do ones Duty for fear of Danger; and a *Spirit of Power* is that which supports and bears up the Mind under a Prospect of *Difficulties*, so as not to be hinder'd thereby from that Duty which lies upon us.

II. With Respect to the *Humours* and *Passions* of Men; and so it is a *Spirit of Love and of a Sound Mind*: Not a peevish, froward, exasperating, provoking Spirit, but a *Spirit of Love*; Not a turbulent, seditious, unruly Spirit, but of a *Sound Mind*.

I. With Respect to *Difficulties* and *Troubles*. Which may be understood Two ways:

1. As it may relate to such as *S. Paul* and *Timothy*; *We have not received, i. e.* we that have an *Apostolical Spirit* given to us.

2: As it may relate to all Christians; *We* that own *Christ* sincerely and truly *have not received, &c.*

(1.) I shall consider the Words with Respect to the *Apostolical Spirit*; because this day we commemorate one of them, (*S. Matthew.*)

Those who had the *Apostolical Office* committed to them, (whether *Primarily* by *Christ* himself, or *Secondarily* by the *Apostles*, as *Timothy* and *Titus* and others) had great need of this *Apostolical Spirit*. For, really, the Difficulties were so great, which they were to go through, that no ordinary Measures of Courage and Resolution would serve them, When men fight with Enemies in the open Field, there is a Multitude combined together; among whom there is abundance of Noise and Heat and Examples; and the Hopes of Present Victory, and the Shame and Danger of running away; which animate Persons in a Day of Battel: but it is another kind of Courage which is required to make men bear up against the Malice and Subtilty of the Devil and of Wicked Men; for here the Combination

tion is to all appearance much stronger on the Worfe side; and if we are to Judge of Success by Numbers, those who promote Vertue and Goodness could never bear up against their Adversaries; who were sure to carry it by the Poll.

There were among the *Heathens* some few Great Men, who endeavour'd to Reform, the Vices of Mankind: but, alas! what poor Success had they in their Attempts this way? Although they wanted neither Wit, nor Learning, nor Address to carry on this Noble Design; such as *Socrates* at *Athens* and *Epictetus* at *Rome*, and some others, who lived agreeably to their Doctrine; yet how little Effect had both their Precepts and Example on the rest of the People either at *Athens* or *Rome*? *Socrates* declared a mighty Resolution rather to die than to say or do any thing unbecoming the Station God placed him in; and upon the Prosecution of two malicious Men, the prevailing Party were resolved to try the Experiment, and took him at his Word. After which, his Disciples durst not deal so plainly and openly as he had done; and the Artifice they were put to, lost the force of the best Part of their *Philosophy*; which they so mixed with Numbers and Figures and Abstracted

Speculations, that it became a *Mystery*, instead of a plain Design to Reform the Manners of Men. The best and wisest of them seem to have taken more pains to Satisfie themselves, than to have Instructed others; or if they did, they were some few chosen Disciples, whom they initiated with as much Care, as they were wont to do in their Solemn Mysteries.

But the Apostles undertook to Reform the World, as to two things, which Mankind are the hardest brought off from, and those are *Idolatry* and *Vice*. And they went plainly and roundly to Work, which men can the least bear; as we see by the Persecutions they underwent almost in every Place as soon as their Design was understood. There was a general Clamour against them as the Disturbers of

Ast. xvij. Mankind, as *those who turned the World upside*
 6. *down*; which in some Sense was true, but not as they meant it with Respect to Order and Government. But when Men have no mind to be Reformed, they must have some Terms of Reproach to fasten upon those who go about to do it. It being Natural for them to put *Pictures of Devils* on those, whom they have a Mind to Execute. And when they endeavour'd to Convince them of their Immoralities,

ralities, they were very Impatient; of which we have a clear Instance in *S. Paul's Preaching to Felix concerning Righteousness and Temperance* Act. xxiv. and Judgment to come: which were excellent Subjects, but they went too near him; he was too much concerned, to be willing to hear any more of them. The Discourse of *S. Paul* had too much Force in it for him to bear it any longer; for it caused such a disorder in his Mind as affected his Body, for *Felix trembled*: And then he thought it best to dismiss him to a more convenient Season, which never came, that we read of. Which shews, how much more willing men are to continue in their Faults, than to hear them reproved in order to Amendment. *Am I therefore become your Enemy, saith S. Paul, because I tell you the Truth?* No doubt of it: For, no Truths can be so uneasy and provoking as those which gaul the Consciences of men. Galiv. 16

The false Teachers whom *S. Paul* complains so much of, were sensible of the Inconveniences which follow'd Plain Truth; and therefore, to avoid Persecution, they so mixed and adulterated the Doctrine of the true Apostles, that it lost its main Force and Efficacy. And although by their shifts and compliances with *Jews and Gentiles*, they escaped the hard Usage which

which others underwent ; yet the Effect of it was, that their Doctrine took no deep rooting in the World : For, in *Origen's* time, a very inconsiderable Number of their Disciples were left. But though the plain Simplicity of the Gospel met with Persecutions on all hands ; yet by the undaunted Courage of the Preachers of it, the more it was opposed, the more it prevailed ; and at last triumphed over its greatest Persecutors.

(2.) These Words may be understood with Respect to all Christians ; and so they shew what the Temper and Spirit of Christianity is, where it hath its due and proper Effect upon mens Minds.

The *Moralists* speak much of an excellent Vertue, which they call *Magnanimity* : which implies such a Greatness of Mind, that it carries a man on in doing what becomes him, without being discouraged by the Fears of what may befall him in it.

And this our Saviour doth suppose to be so attainable by all his Disciples, that he requires
 Matth. x. it from them. *Fear not them which can kill the*
 28. *Body, but are not able to kill the Soul, or Be*
 Luke xij. *not afraid of them that kill the Body, and af-*
 5. *ter that have no more that they can do. i. e. Go-*
 vern your Fears by the Consideration of ano-

ther

ther World and not of this. But is this possible, to be rid of our Fears as to this World? It may be some *Heroical* minds may attain to this; or those on whom God bestows the extraordinary Gifts of his Spirit: but can any by the common Measures and Assistances of Grace reach to it? Fear is a Natural and Violent Passion; which is not easily dissembled, much less cured; and the weaker any are, as to mind or body, the more they are subject to the Power of it. There are some Constitutions by Reason of their dark and confused and melancholy Apprehensions of things, can never get out of the Labyrinth of their own Fears. And where Suspicions and Jealousies find an easie entertainment, it is not possible to cure such Persons Fears; for they are afraid of all possible things. Such I must exclude as labouring under a Disease of Imagination; as we do those who are under a Feaver; And for whose *Unreasonable Fears* I know no better Cure than there is of Madness, which is to bring the Persons to the Use of Reason as well as we can; and if Reason doth not cure them, nothing else will.

But let us suppose the Fears Reasonable, *i.e.* such as considering the State of the World a Prudent man may justly apprehend; is it not possible

possible to master these Fears? Not to Cure our Apprehension when it is Reasonable, but to take Care, that it do not torment and disquiet our Minds; but especially that it do not hinder us from doing our Duty.

And this is that Spirit of *Christian Magnanimity* which I design to speak of; and to make the matter as clear as I can; I shall,

(1.) Enquire into those things which the *Nature* of *Magnanimity* requires in general.

(2.) Shew the particular *Measures* of it according to *Christianity*.

(3.) Consider the *Possibility* of attaining it, and the Means in order to it.

(1.) As to *Magnanimity* in general; It is not so much any one *Virtue*, as a Result from several put together; and especially these,

(1.) Integrity of Mind: Which implies these things.

1. A Freedom from any mean and sinister Ends in what we do. *Aristotle*,

who considered the Nature of Moral Vertues, as well as any man, saith, there can be no *Magnanimity* without *Simplicity* and *Truth*. And *Cicero* saith, Men of *Courage and Magnanimity*, are men of *Simplicity and Truth*, and not gi-

ven

Ἀκολούθει τῇ αἰσχρολογίᾳ ἀπλοῦς καὶ ἀλθέει. *Arist. de Virt. & Vitiis*

Itaq; Viros fortes, magnanimos, eosq; bonos & simplices, veritatis amicos, minimiq; fallaces esse voluit. *Off. l. 1.*

ven to Tricks. It is the Sense of its own Weakness which disposes any Living Creature to Craft and Cunning: The Lion knows his own strength and despises it; the Fox is sensible he hath not strength enough for his own Security, and therefore tries all other ways to compass his End. A Spirit of Magnanimity is above all little Arts and Shifts, which tend onely to some mean and pitifull end, not worthy to be regarded. Men of Artifice and Design may think it Weakness and Folly; but it is really a Greatness of Mind which makes a Good and Wise Man despise such things as unbecoming that true Greatness which lies in a Generous Integrity: which cunning men can no more reach to, even when they affect it, than an Actor upon a Stage can the true Greatness of a Prince.

2. Sincere and unaffected Goodness. Which is that, which *Aristotle* calls *Kαλοκαγα- Nicom. l. 4*
Stz, and makes absolutely necessary to *Mag- c. 3.*
nanimity. The first thing in the Character of a Good Man among the *Moralists* is, that he be inwardly so; not taking upon him the Appearance and Shew of Vertue for the sake of others; but forming his Mind and Temper according to the Principles and Rules of it. And when he hath done this, the whole

Course of his Actions will be agreeable thereto : he will not onely be just and temperate, but kind and obliging, ready to do Good to all, according to his Circumstances ; and behaving himself under all, as becomes a Good Man.

(2.) There must not onely be *Integrity*, but *Courage* and *Resolution* ; without which, in difficult times, it is impossible to maintain Integrity. I do not by this mean any sudden and violent Heats, which rather shew the Greatness of the Passions than of the Mind ; but a calm and sedate Courage, which exceeds the other, as a man of true Valour doth one that is rash and fool-hardy. The latter may do bolder things than the other ; but none of the *Moralists* allow it to be *true Fortitude* ; for that must be guided by Reason and Discretion. The bold and daring man never considers what he doth ; but he is carried on by a sudden and violent *Impetus*, or such an agitation of Spirits, that suffer him not to Think ; but on he goes, and if he meets with Success, it is more owing to his Passion and Heat, than to his Wisdom or Courage. Violent and furious Heats (although under a pretence of Zeal for Religion) are like the furious Onsets of undisciplined Souldiers, which do more Mischief by their

their want of Order, than they do Good by unseasonable Courage. True Courage must be a Regular thing; it must have not only a Good End, but a wise choice of Means; and then the Courage lies in the vigorous Pursuit of it: not being disheartned by difficulties, nor giving over through despondency or disappointments.

(3.) There must be an Indifferency of Mind, as to the Event of doing our Duty. Not a perfect Indifferency, which human Nature is hardly capable of; but such as keeps a mans mind firm and constant so as not to be moved from the Dictates of a well-satisfied Conscience by the Motives of this World. It was a remarkable saying of Socrates, which Antoninus takes notice of, *That man, saith he, is of no value, who regards any thing so much as doing his Duty.* *Antonin. L. 7. § 44.* It is not whether a man lives or dies, but whether what he doth be just or unjust, whether it becomes a Good man to do it, or not, which he is to look after.

If thou canst not find any thing in Life, saith *L. 3. § 3.* that excellent Emperor himself, better than Justice and Truth, a sound Mind (*Σοφία* the word here used) and a discreet Courage; then make this thy great business and apply thy self to it with all thy heart. Let neither popular Applause, nor Power,

nor Riches, nor Sensual Pleasure draw thee off from it. Choose that which is best and pursue it, *ἐπιδιώκε*
ἐπιδιώκε with simplicity of mind and the free
 Inclination of thy will.

But the Roman Orator goes beyond them,
 off. l. i. when he saith, that Nothing argues so mean and
 narrow a mind, as the Love of Riches; nothing
 savours more of a great Mind, than to contemn
 them; and if Men enjoy them to bestow them in
 Beneficence and Liberality. And again,

E. 2. To value Justice and Honesty and Kindness and
 Liberality above Pleasure and Riches and Life it
 self, and the Common Good above ones private
 Interest, argues a truly Great Mind, and is most
 agreeable to human Nature.

These things I have mention'd, not onely
 to clear the Nature of Magnanimity; but to
 shew what generous Notions these Heathens
 had concerning the Practise of Vertue and In-
 tegrity, even when it was accompanied with
 Losses and Hardships for the sake of it; and
 what a mean Esteem they had in Comparison
 of that great *Idol*, which the World still wor-
 ships, i. e. Riches.

(2.) I now come to shew the true Measures
 of Magnanimity according to the Christian
 Doctrine. And that consists in two things:

1. In studying to Please God above all things.

2. In choosing rather to Suffer than to Displease him.

1. In studying to Please God above all things. *Aristotle* hath observed that *Magnanimity* hath a particular Respect to Honour; the

Question then is, whether it relates to what gets Esteem and Honour among Men; or, to that Honour which comes from God. It's true, the *Heathen Moralists* knew very little of this; although *Aristotle* once mentions the

Kindness which God hath for Persons of the most excellent and virtuous Minds, as being nearest of Kindred to the Gods. But this was not settled as a Principle among them; but it is the

Foundation of all true Religion with us, that our main Care ought to be to Please God, and to value other things as they are most pleasing to him. The most Refined Atheists of this Age confess, that the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles is very Pious and Vertuous; although they look on them as deceived in their Imaginations. We take what they grant, viz. that the *Morals* of Christianity are very Good; but we say, that it is a heightning and improving of Moral Vertues to make them Divine Graces; and not to practise them meerly

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ly as agreeable to Reason, but as Pleasing to God. Those who allow a God, who is wise and Powerfull, do confess, that no Sacrifices are so pleasing to him, as a Pious, devout and vertuous Mind: but then they were to seek, as to the Measures of Piety and Vertue. But that is the Infinite Advantage by the Scriptures, which we enjoy, that by them we know what is most pleasing to God. *He hath shewed thee,*

Mic.vj.8. *O Man, what is Good, and what hath the Lord requir'd of thee; but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* When God sheweth us our Duty, we have no longer any ground to dispute it; especially, when it is so agreeable to the Divine Nature, and our own. What can we do better with Respect to Mankind, than *to do justly and to love Mercy*? What can become us more with Respect to God, than *to walk humbly with our God*? *To walk with God*, is to have a constant Regard to him in the Course of our Lives; thus *Enoch walked with God*, and *Noah and Abraham*: and *to walk humbly with him*, is to maintain a due Sense of our Distance from him and our Dependence upon him. And this *Humility of Mind* doth not take off from true *Magnanimity*; for, it is the *Magnanimity* of Christians that I am speaking of. The *Magnanimity* of
Philoso-

Philosophers carried them beyond the due bounds of their Dependence upon God; for they presumed upon their own Sufficiency, both as to the support of their Minds under Difficulties and the making themselves happy. In both which they were lamentably mistaken. But the Humility of Christians in depending upon God for Assistance and Happiness is so far from being inconsistent with *Magnanimity*, that it is not to be had without it. For, saith *Phil. iv.*
S. Paul, I can do all things. Can any thing be said greater than that? But how? *Through Christ which strengtheneth me.* And this Dependence upon God for his Grace is no more inconsistent with *Magnanimity*, than a Favourite's Greatness is with his Duty and Service to his Prince. The Christians *Magnanimity* lies in having but one to please; but such a one, as is the Greatest, the Wildest, the Happiest Being in the World.

2. But if he cannot Please God and the World together, then this *Magnanimity* carries him rather to choose suffering under the World's Displeasure, than to displease God. This seems a hard choice; but there would be no *Magnanimity* without Difficulty. It may please God, that our Duty and Interest may lye together, and then it is Folly and Humour

to choose to suffer when we need not. Where there is true *Magnanimity* in Suffering, there is an impartial and prudent weighing and balancing all Circumstances together, before there can be a just Resolution of Suffering. And a mans Courage in suffering depends very much upon the Motives induced him to it; which every Mans Conscience must judge of.

But there are two sorts of Sufferings *Magnanimity* may shew it self in:

(1.) The Necessary and unavoidable Accidents and Calamities of Life.

(2.) The Voluntary preferring a suffering Condition rather than sinning against God.

(1.) As to the Common Accidents of Life.

Aristot. It is observed by the *Moralists*, that it is a harder thing to bear things that are troublesome, than
Mor. l. 3. to abstain from things that are pleasant: the
c. 12. Sense of Pain and Suffering being much more
Aug. 83. uneasy, than the forbearing what is delightful; which is onely crossing a Natural Inclination. And though many Persons choose rather to yield to their vicious Inclinations than to avoid the Pains and Diseases which follow them; yet that is because they look on them as uncertain and at a Distance, and hope they may escape them.

But when it is certain and present, human Nature

Nature is very tender and sensible of Pain and shrinks from it; and requires inward Courage to support it self under it. It is observed by the Roman Orator, that a peculiar kind of Courage is necessary for suffering Pains and Diseases; for many that have been brave men in the Field, yet could not *viriliter agrotare*, behave themselves like Men when they came to be sick. The Truth is, all Mankind abhor suffering so much, that one of the great Inducements to the study of *Morality* of old, was to find out some *Antidotes* against the Common Accidents of Life.

For they soon found there were some Sufferings incident to human Nature, which all the Art and Skill of the Wisest Men could never prevent. Our Bodies are continually subject to Pains, to Diseases, to Corruption and Dissolution. Our Estates to Violence, Fraud and Misfortune. Our Houses and Cities to Flames, to Earthquakes, to Inundations. Our Friends and Relations are all liable to the same Calamities with our Selves, and that makes our Trouble the greater.

What now should Wise Men do? Can they hope to stem the Tide, and to turn back the Stream? No, that is too violent for them. Can they raise any Banks or Sea-Walls against them

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to keep them out? All such are vain and fruitless. What then? Shall they strip themselves of all the Comforts of Life, that they may leave nothing to Misfortune? So some did, to no great purpose, unless they could shake off their Passions too. But this doth not look like *Magnanimity*, but Cowardize; not overcoming an Enemy, but running away from him. By the same Method, they must go naked to avoid Robbery; and live on the Tops of Mountains to escape a Deluge.

But some thought these things look'd most terrible at a Distance; whereas if they consider'd how common they were, they would learn to bear them better. But *Carneades* said well, *Malevoli animi Solutium est turba miserrum*; it is a kind of ill-natur'd Comfort which one draws from the commonness of Calamities. And after all, it is no real Satisfaction to a mans mind, to think that so many suffer as he doth; it is like the unnatural Pleasure of Revenge, which one man takes in anothers Pain.

There is one thing it serves well for, and that is to shew the Folly of great Impatience under such things which the rest of Mankind bear. Thus *Julian* in his Epistle to *Amerius* relates a Story of *Democritus* his dealing with

Epist. 37. *Darius* upon the loss of his beloved Wife. After
several

several ineffectual Ways of comforting him ; at last he asked him, whether bringing her to Life would not put an End to his Grief? No doubt of it. But how should this be done? Let me alone for that, said the Philosopher, if you will provide me all the things I shall desire in order to it. After great Care taken in providing many things for him, *Darius* asked him if he had all he wanted? No, said he; there is one thing more I must have, and you are the most likely Person to furnish me with it. In short, you must get me three Names to be put upon her Monument of such Persons who have gone to their Graves without Sorrow or Trouble; and You, said he, have very large and populous Dominions, and no doubt if such a thing be to be had, you can procure it. *Darius* was struck with this, and after some consideration said, *he doubted he could not.* Why then, said the Philosopher smiling, Are not You ashamed to be guilty of so much Folly as to be so exceedingly cast down under such a Calamity, as though you were the onely Person in the World that underwent it? This was agreeable enough to his Humour in Exposing the Folly of Mankind; which was a Subject large enough for his whole Life; but he was too pleasant upon it.

I do not deny but the *Moralists* did find out some very Usefull Considerations to bear men up under the Common Accidents of Life; but those of greatest Moment, were such as are much improved by *Christianity*; viz. the Wisdom of Providence, the Usefulness of Trials, the Benefit of Patience, and the Expectation of a better State.

(2.) As to Voluntary and chosen Sufferings. We have in Scripture several extraordinary Instances of this kind of *Magnanimity*; such was *Abraham's* leaving his Kindred and Country and going he knew not whither on God's Command, and his readiness to Sacrifice his Son; which argued an entire Sacrifice of himself to the Will of God. Such was *Moses* his *Choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God than to enjoy the Pleasures of Pharaoh's Court*. Such was the Son of God's choosing to suffer for our sakes, with admirable Resignation to the Divine Will; and praying for his Persecutors under the greatest Agonies on the Cross. Such was the Apostles Resolution and Courage, when *they rejoiced to be accounted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ*; when they were *more than Conquerors* in the midst of Persecutions. And truly the *Magnanimity* of Suffering rather than Sinning, was
never

never so much shewn to the World as in the Case of the *Primitive Christians*. There were some few *Heroick* Instances of Suffering for Truth among the Heathens; but they were no more to be compared with the Numerous Examples of the *Primitive Church* than the Miracles of the *Vestal Virgins* were with those of the *Apostles*.

It could not but amaze the common sort of Spectators of *Rome*, who were wont to see the *Gladiators*, (who were either hired or condemned to that Cruel Entertainment of others with their blood) to behold a sort of Grave and Serious Persons expose themselves to so much Torment and Cruelty, when so small a matter as burning a little Incense would set them free. This was a New Spectacle to the World, and it could not but put them upon thinking what strange sort of *Philosophy* this was, which inspired ordinary Persons with such a *Magnanimity* in suffering. They had never found those who pretended to *Philosophy* among them very fond of Suffering for the Doctrine they taught. They rather liked the Example of *Aristotle* than *Socrates*; who when the People of *Athens* were enraged against him, withdrew to *Chalcis*; and when he was upbraided with it, made a witty Excuse, *that he*
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had no mind the City of Athens should sin twice against Philosophy. Whereas the Christians were so forward to suffer for their Doctrine, that it was imputed as a Fault to them; and it appears by *Tertullian* that some out-went the bounds of *Christianity* in offering themselves too freely to it. This made such as *Antoninus* and others impute all their Sufferings to an *invincible Obstinacy* and a sort of *Madness* which possessed them: which had been easily confuted, if they would have had the Patience to have examin'd the Reasons and Grounds of their Religion, as they did the peculiar Doctrines of the several Sects of *Philosophers*. But this is not all which *Christian Magnanimity* doth imply; for it is not onely a *Spirit of Power*, but of *Love* and of a *Sound Mind*. And so it hath

Tertull.
ad Scap.

Antonin.
l. 11. §. 3.

Arrian.
l. 4. c. 7.

II. A Respect to the *Humours* and *Passions* of Men. And truly, there is such a Variety and Uncertainty in them; so much Folly and Mistake; so much Prejudice and Peevishness in some; so much Wilfulness and Stiffness in others; so little Regard to the true Interests of Religion and Vertue, under all the pretences to it; that those who sincerely desire to promote them had need of *Magnanimity* to bear

bear them up against such Humours and Distempers of Mens Minds. *Aristotle* hath well observed that *Magnanimity* doth go beyond the Consideration of Dangers. *It makes a man* *Mor. l. 4. c. 3.*
more ready to do Kindnesses than to receive them; and to forget Injuries. I add, *and to forgive them;* for else, it is rather want of Memory, than *Magnanimity*. It is well he adds one thing, *viz.* that he that hath *Magnanimity* is *Average*, *Contented within himself;* so he had need to be; for he will find very little Satisfaction abroad, especially in an Age when *Sincerity* is almost lost: when men have used themselves to so much Hypocrisie and Diffimulation with God and Man, that they can zealously pretend to Love what they would be glad to Ruine, and cry up Peace and Unity onely to get an Opportunity to destroy them. But still true *Magnanimity* keeps a Mans own mind at Ease, and *makes him to govern himself,* as the same Philosopher observes, *with due Temper and Moderation in all things.* Such a one is not onely Easie to himself, but to all others, as far as is consistent with his Duty. For a Mind truly Great, hath nothing of Bitterness, or Sowness; Peevishness, or Ill Will to the rest of Mankind. All Malice and Cruelty argue a Mean and Base Spirit. The more noble
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and generous any Tempers are, the more tender and compassionate they are, the more ready to oblige, the more easie to forgive, the more willing to be Reconciled.

But to be more particular, there are two things implied in *this Spirit of Love and of a Sound Mind*.

(1.) The making all Reasonable Allowances for the Infirmities of others. It makes men to consider the Prejudices of Education; the Variety and Weakness of most mens Judgments; the Power of Perswasion; the Bias of Parties; and the Shame and Reproach which Persons undergo that break off from them, after they have been once ensnared by them. On these Accounts it makes them rather Pity than Triumph over the Follies of Mankind. There are two things which a Great Mind doth most abhor in Religion, and are most directly contrary to *a Spirit of Love and a Sound Mind*; and these are *Hypocrisie and Cruelty*; which make men false to God, and Enemies to Mankind. These two often go together; and although they are masked under a pretence of Religion, yet there are no two things more opposite to the true Spirit and Design of it. S. John concludes that man to have no true Love to God who doth not love his

his Brother. *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* And we may argue the other way; If a man doth not Love God, how can he love his Brother? When the Love of God is the best Foundation for Charity and Kindness to our Brethren, who were at first made after the Image of God, and have it again renewed in them by the Power of Divine Grace in Righteousness and true Holiness. And even where that doth not appear, yet there is a Tenderness and Compassion due to Mankind, as far as is consistent with the Order and Government of the World.

Joh. iv

20.

Eph. iv.

24.

(2.) The Spirit of Love and of a Sound Mind, consists in laying aside private Animosities and Heats for a Publick and General Good. That is a thing too great and too sacred, to be exposed and ridiculed, as though it were only a Popular pretence for Faction and Sedition. Whereas Nothing is more directly opposite to it; for therefore it is called Faction and Sedition, because it is against it. If it hath been abused by men of ill Minds, so have the best things in the World; but they do not lose their Nature and Excellency by it. If there be not such a thing as a Common Good, whence comes any Mans Obligation to pre-

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serve Order and Government, and to seek the Safety and Welfare of his Country, although it may be to the hazard of his own Life: If there be such a thing, it deserves our Regard in the first Place, and we ought to lay aside all Prejudices, and mutual Animosities and the Interests of particular Parties, and heartily to promote that which is our true Common Interest, as we are English Men and Protestants of the Church of *England*; which is a great and considerable Part of the Christian Church, and the Chief of the Reformation. It is hard for any not to see that the whole Protestant Interest lies at Stake; and that the Preservation of it depends very much on our Conduct and Union at this time.

But if we find any to be humour some and peevish, any to struggle more for the Interest of a Party to make it uppermost, than for our Common Good, although it be a very sad Consideration and bodes very ill to us all; yet we have that poor Comfort left us, that men were as ill disposed even in the Apostles times. *For, saith S. Paul, (at a time when one would have thought they should have been much better inclined) All men seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christs. I hope it cannot be said of all now; but I fear*

Phil. ij.

21.

it is so true of too many, that it is one of the worst *Symptoms* of the present State of our Affairs. And that which makes it more deplorable is, that some Men have entertained such Suspicion and Jealousie of each other, that he that goes about to Reconcile them, instead of making them Friends, is look'd on as a common Enemy. I am afraid there is not Sincerity and Integrity enough left to be a Foundation for uniting several Parties among us; at least there wants an Opinion of it. And as long as there are such Mistrusts and Jealousies, the greatest Integrity is so far useless.

Some learned and good Men have been of late apt to persuade themselves and others, that the Glorious and Happy times of the Church are coming on; I could be glad to be of their opinion; for it is a comfortable thing to a man who travels in an ill Road and with bad Company, whom he is perpetually afraid of, to see at a distance a pleasant and safe Country, where he shall be rid of his Fears and Dangers. But I confess, I cannot much please my self with such thoughts, till I see the Tempers of Mens minds begin to change towards one another. If I could once see the *Spirit of Love and a sound time* prevail among us; If men would be contented to

Sacrifice their Humours and Piques to the Publick Interest ; in short, if there were any hopes Men would be Wise and Good, there were then a great Foundation for hope, that all things would be settled among us, so as to continue for succeeding Generations.

But if Men will persist in their own Wilfull Humours ; If they had rather all should perish, than they not compass their own Ends ; we need no foreign Enemies to come in upon us, we shall soon come to that height of Animosity, *as to bite and devour one another* ; and then it is an easie Inference, *that we shall be consumed one of another*. I am far from thinking our Case desperate ; for I hope Men have not lost all their Sense and Zeal for our Common Interest ; but if Mens Heats and Passions increase and grow fiercer, a Man needs not pretend to Prophecy to foretell what the dreadful Consequence will be.

The true Spirit of Religion seems to be buried in Mens warm Contentions about it ; and some have pretended to a sort of Zeal without Conscience, to Religion without Faith, and to Scruples without common Honesty.

If ever God designs to doe us Good, there must be a great Alteration in Mens Tempers and Manners. We must have more Sincerity
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and Integrity among us; the want of which hath caused such a general Mistrust of one another; that if *Faith* were to save the Nation, I am afraid there is hardly enough left in it. And it looks like one of the Symptoms of the Day of Judgment upon us: For, *if the Son of Man should come, he would hardly find Faith upon Earth.*

But instead of discoursing of *Magnanimity*, I am sensible I have run into the Object and Reason of our Fears. But therefore to conclude all, I shall speak briefly to the last Particular, which was,

(3.) To consider what Arguments and Means there are to support us against our Fears; or to attain to that *Christian Magnanimity* I have been discoursing of. And there are two great Arguments which Christianity doth particularly recommend to us.

1. Let things go as ill as we can fear in this World; if we are sincere Christians, there is a far better State to come; to which we shall be admitted when we are once out of this troublesome and sinfull World. There will be no Hurries and Confusions, no Jealousies and Suspicions, no Piques and Animosities. The highest Regions of the Air are the most calm and serene; all the Clouds and Storms.

Storms and blustering Winds are below and arise from the *Atmosphere*. If our Minds were more loose from the World we should be more at quiet: For, at the bottom, the Considerations of this World make Men so troublesome in it. It is Honour or Power or Riches which make them so unquiet, and endeavouring to supplant and undermine one another. If Men could learn to be content with that which they pretend was all they so long and so impatiently desired, there might be some hopes of seeing something like Peace and Unity among us: but if Liberty be thought to signifie nothing without Power, it is Reasonable to suppose that Power will signifie nothing, unless it be all in their own Hands. And what can they imagine the rest of the Nation will do? Will they suffer an established Church, and such a one as ours is (which I think an *Apostolical Church*, as to Doctrine, Worship and Government, if there be any now in the World) to be run down with the violent Heats of some men, and look on as wholly unconcerned? They are extremely mistaken in the Temper of the Nation who think so. But if men will not be quiet, when they have all they pretended to desire, what can we expect but further Animosities will Discourage our Friends,

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Animate our common Enemies, and Expose us all to Confusion, if not to Ruine. It Men loved this World less and another better, they would be more quiet here, and be more carefull to prepare for that better State. *If our Conversation were in Heaven*, as it ought to be, with what Contempt should we look down upon the busie Designs, the restless Cares, the vain Hopes and the perplexing Fears of the greatest part of Mankind? Then we should have more Peace and Tranquillity in our minds while we live, and greater Satisfaction when we come to die. For Integrity and Innocency will keep us most from giving disturbance to others, and from finding any in our own Breasts. *Who so hearkeneth unto Wisdom, shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from the Fear of Evil.* Pro. 1.23.

2. We are assured that we are under the Constant Care of Divine Providence. The Tranquillity of our minds in this World depends very much upon the Esteem we have of Providence and the Trust we repose in God. What makes Children pass their time without solicitous thoughts about themselves, but the Confidence they have in the Wisdom and Care of their Parents? What makes Passengers lie down at rest in a Ship at Sea, but because they trust

trust to the Conduct of their Pilot? We cannot alter the Methods of Providence by all our Solicitude; God will govern the World by his own Measures and not by ours. The Government is his, the duty of Submission is ours. Let us not then be peevish and quarrelsome at what he doth; but make the best Use of any extraordinary Instance of his Providence which seems to be intended for our Good, unless we turn it another Way.

But it is not enough to be meerly Contented with Providence; but we ought to be active and usefull in our own Places to promote the common Interest; and not to Repine and Murmur at what is Necessary for the Support of it. Let us not torment our Selves with Fears of what may and what may not happen; but let us commit our Selves to God in well-doing as to our Creator and Preserver.

For

F A N T A S I E S